



## *BiH REAP Success Story*

### **Stakeholders in the energy sector adopt improved Communications Practice**

#### ***Public Relations' Values in Action: From Crisis to Opportunity***

Public relations, communication with the media, public support... who needs that? That's the question posed by governmental organizations and individuals, especially when confronted with the prospect of actually hiring and paying for PR work. This

*“Maintaining an open, attractive attitude in public communication efforts helps us to create and improve relationships with citizens and stakeholders in the energy sector. Establishing and maintaining a commitment to these relationships, can help us to further our primary purpose”, says Slobodanka Milasinovic, a member of the RS Regulatory Commission on Energy.*

skepticism led by old-fashioned ideas that only private companies and marketing agencies need PR, but not state agencies, has been replaced by exciting new knowledge and views through training and outreach by USAID.

As part of USAID/BiH's reforms in the energy sector, communication, public relations is a key component of the Regulatory and Energy Assistance

Project (USAID/REAP). No easy task given the old-fashioned ideas of how a government agency communicates, but these old attitudes are changing to new, different, and positive thinking.

USAID/REAP has successfully trained over 70 state employees, including managers and commissioners in key ministries and state companies, in communicating with the media, giving interviews, sending targeted and clear messages, initiating successful stories in the media, as well as developing improved communication strategies within their organizations.

After the successful training sessions, during first half of 2008, leading employees in the ministries and public agencies in the energy sector now agree that gaining media attention requires a strategic focus on key media targets, followed by a sound implementation plan. Soon after, each of the government organizations that



***USAID/REAP public outreach expert trains State regulators for energy***

participated in the trainings hired their own PR experts, and has requested additional assistance from USAID/REAP for additional help in creating and implementing strategic communication plans.

As a result of USAID/REAP's activities and focus on public relations in the energy sector, Ministry Officials, Regulators and State energy Companies now have enhanced credibility and are able to accurately present themselves to the larger community in an effective manner in promoting the energy sector.

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